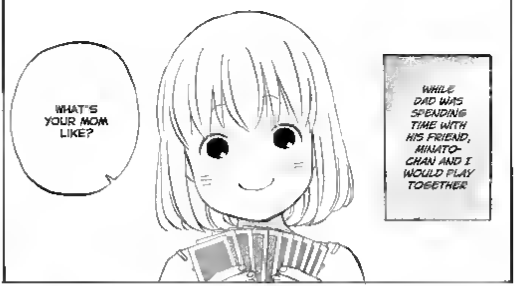
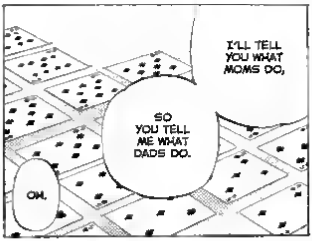
Chapter 52 x Tooru-kun and Minato-chan (Part 1)

WE MET WHEN WE WERE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS,
AND I'VE PROBABLY BEEN IN LOVE WITH HER EVER SINCE.
SHE WAS MOST LIKELY MY FIRST LOVE.


WHAT'S YOUR MOM LIKE?
WHILE DAD WAS SPENDING TIME WITH HIS FRIEND, MINATO-CHAN AND I WOULD PLAY TOGETHER

SO I WAS WONDERING WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HAVE A MOM.
I DON'T REMEMBER MY MOM BECAUSE SHE GOT SICK AND DIED WHEN I WAS TWO.
OH!
UH... WELL, THAT'S NOT REALLY WHAT I MEANT
SHE CAN BE SCARY IF YOU MAKE HER MAD, BUT SHE'S PRETTY NICE-
MY MOM?

HUH
I'M NOT EVEN SURE WHAT A FATHER'S SUPPOSED TO DO
MY PARENTS SPLIT BEFORE I WAS BORN.
I'M THE OPPOSITE I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HAVE A DAD


I'LL TELL YOU WHAT MOMS DO,
SO YOU TELL ME WHAT DADS DO.
OH.

HUH?
WHAT DOES HE DO FOR YOU?
YOUR DAD.

I SEE.
HE DOESN'T DO IT MUCH ANYMORE, BUT HE USED TO CARRY ME ON HIS SHOULDERS
HE CAN DO A TURN SWING, TOO.

UMM... DADS, HUH...

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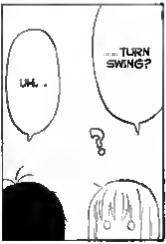
SFX. GRAB


UH..
...TURN SWING?

HOW ABOUT MOMS?
HMM, MOMS...
I KNOW!

OHH!
SOUNDS LIKE DADS HAVE IT ROUGH...
LIKE THIS!
SFX: SPIN (X2)

AND THEY TUCK YOU IN AT NIGHT
TUCK YOU IN?
MOMS MAKE SWEETS FOR YOU
AND IF YOU DO SOMETHING WELL, THEN THEY SAY THINGS LIKE "YOU'RE THE BEST LITTLE GIRL IN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD"

I KINDA WISH HE DID SOMETIMES...
MY DAD DOESN'T STROKE MY HEAD MUCH
SFX: PAT

WOW. I DO MOMS REALLY DO ALL THAT!?
SHE STROKES MY HEAD AND TELLS ME THAT SHE LOVES ME LOTS AND LOTS...

HE'LL THINK I'M BEING SPOILED
I JUST... I CAN'T GO AND SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT BECAUSE IT SEEMS LIKE I'M BEGGING FOR ATTENTION
YEAH BUT...
Just say, "Please stroke my head."
HE'D PROBABLY DO IT IF YOU ASKED HIM TO, DON'T YOU THINK?

NO, YOU'RE DEFINITELY SUPER NICE!
R-REALLY? I'M NOT THAT GREAT...
YOU'RE SO NICE, TOORU-KUN.

SO I DON'T WANT TO BOTHER HIM BY ACTING ALL SPOILED LIKE THAT...
MY DAD'S ALWAYS REALLY BUSY AT WORK AND COMES HOME REALLY TIRED,
SFX. PAT

THAT'S WHY I'LL STROKE YOUR HAIR FOR YOU!
THINKING OF YOUR FAMILY MAKES YOU THE NICEST LITTLE BOY IN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD!
OH I'LL TELL YOU THAT I LOVE YOU LOTS AND LOTS... YEP!
AND THEN, WHAT WAS IT...
SO I ALWAYS LOOKED FORWARD TO THOSE DAYS...
THE DAYS WHEN DAD WENT TO SEE HIS FRIEND WERE THE DAYS I GOT TO SEE MINATO-CHAN!
I WISH WE COULD SPEND EVERYDAY TOGETHER TOO!
HEHEHE!
I WISH I COULD SEE YOU EVERYDAY

IF ONLY YOU WENT TO MEET YOUR FRIEND EVERY-DAY

AND I WAS ALWAYS SAD ON THE WAY BACK HOME.

IF I'M GOING TO GO EVERY-DAY, THEN WE SHOULD PRO-BABLY JUST GO AHEAD AND GET MARRIED

YEAH.

THEN YOU GUYS SHOULD GET MARRIED!
HAHAHA, YOU SHOULDN'T RUSH THINGS, TOORU-

OH,
SO I CAN SEE MINATO-CHAN EVERYDAY IF THEY GET MARRIED!

I WISH WE COULD SPEND EVERYDAY TOGETHER TOO!

I'LL TELL HER NEXT TIME I SEE HER

I KNOW MINATO-CHAN AND I SHOULD GET MARRIED TOO SOMEDAY.

I CAME TO THIS WAVE CONCLUSION.

MINATO-CHAN WILL DEFINITELY THINK IT'S A GOOD IDEA

I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND AT THE TIME WHY A MAN AND A WOMAN WOULD HAVE THEIR CHILDREN SPEND TIME WITH EACH OTHER

AND MY DAD'S FRIEND WASN'T JUST A FRIEND LIKE I THOUGHT SHE WAS

MY DAD WASN'T JUST MY DAD

EH... YOU AND MINATO-CHAN'S MOM ARE GETTING MARRIED?
THAT'S RIGHT, TOORU...!
WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO MOVE, SO IT'LL BE A LITTLE ROUGH FOR A WHILE.
BUT STARTING IN THE SPRING, THE FOUR OF US ARE GOING TO LIVE TOGETHER! ISN'T THAT GREAT?
YOU, ME, MINATO-CHAN'S MOM, AND MINATO-CHAN?
YEP!
SHE WON'T BE MINATO-CHAN'S MOM ANYMORE. SHE'LL JUST BE MOM AND MINATO-CHAN WILL BE YOUR BIG SISTER
I KNOW NOW...

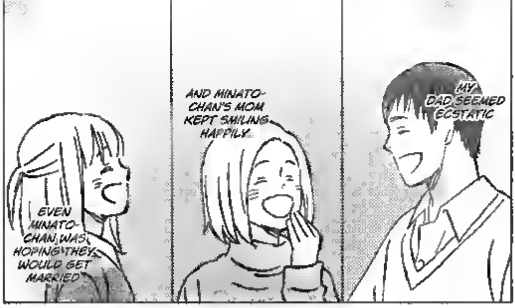
HER MOM'S PROBABLY TELLING HER RIGHT ABOUT NOW DON'T YOU THINK?
DOES MINATO-CHAN ALREADY KNOW YOU TWO ARE GETTING MARRIED?

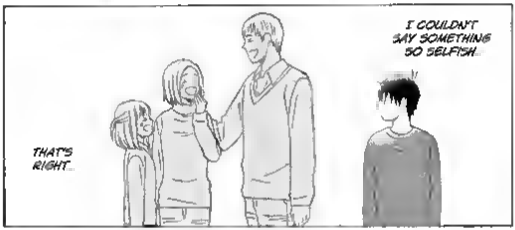
HA HA HA
APPARENTLY MINATO CHAN WAS TELLING HER TO HURRY UP AND GET MARRIED

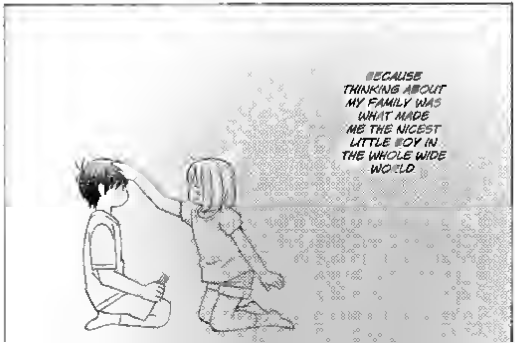
...THAT SIBLINGS CAN'T MARRY EACH OTHER

I CAN'T TELL THEM I DON'T WANT THEM TO GET MARRIED NOW

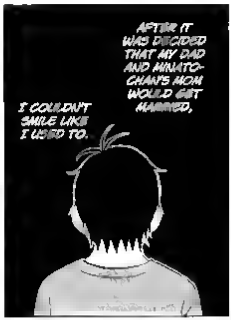
BUT THE FACT THAT WE WANTED IT IN SUCH DIFFERENT WAYS CAME AS A SHOCK TO ME...
MINATO-CHAN AND I BOTH WANTED TO BE TOGETHER


EVEN MINATO-CHAN, WAS HOPING THEY'D WOULD GET MARRIED.
AND MINATO-CHAN'S MOM KEPT SMILING HAPPILY.
MY DAD SEEMED ECSTATIC


THAT'S RIGHT.
I COULDN'T SAY SOMETHING SO SELFISH.


BECAUSE THINKING ABOUT MY FAMILY WAS WHAT MADE ME THE NICEST LITTLE BOY IN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD

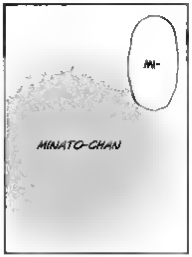
I COULDN'T LET ANY OF THOSE FEELINGS SHOW.
MY DISAPPROVAL OF THE WEDDING, MY DISAPPOINTMENT THAT MINATO-CHAN AND I COULD NEVER GET MARRIED, AND MY LOVE FOR MINATO-CHAN...
BUT THEN I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF EXPRESSION I WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE ANYMORE.


AFTER IT WAS DECIDED THAT MY DAD AND MINATO-CHAN'S MOM WOULD GET MARRIED,
I COULDN'T SMILE LIKE I USED TO.

I DIDN'T REALIZE, I'M SORRY
TOORU WHAT'S WRONG?

THEY WERE ALL WORRIED ABOUT ME
COULD IT BE THAT... YOU DIDN'T WANT US TO GET MARRIED?

YOU KNOW THAT YOUR FEELINGS ARE ALWAYS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO ME, RIGHT?


MI-
MINATO-CHAN

I. . DO THINK OF YOU AS MY MOM NOW.
AND...

IT'S JUST THAT I'M A MIDDLE SCHOOLER NOW.
AND IT'S EMBARRASSING TO SPEND TIME WITH MY FAMILY.

I'M HAPPY I HAVE A NEW SISTER...

AS FOR MINATO-CHAN...
IT'S THE SAME FOR ME...
AND I FELT A LITTLE DISAPPOINTED THAT THEY WERE SO EASILY CONVINCED
THEY AGREED WITH ME THAT BEING IN MIDDLE SCHOOL COULD BE LIKE THAT...
CAUSE WE'RE TOGETHER!
I'M REALLY HAPPY THAT TOORU-KUN IS MY LITTLE BROTHER NOW TOO!
WE'RE NOT REALLY TOGETHER AT ALL.
WE'RE NOT, THOUGH

I TRIED NOT TO BE OVERLY CLINGY, BUT IT'S NOT AS IF WE DIDN'T GET ALONG.
THUS THE ARGEST LITTLE BOY IN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD HAD TO BECOME THE MOST NORMAL LITTLE BROTHER IN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD

WE GOT ALONG JUST AS WELL AS ANY NORMAL SIBLINGS WOULD
WE WOULD CHECK OUR ANSWERS ON OUR HOME-WORK

WE WOULD DO CHORES TO-GETHER,
LIKE WASHING THE DISHES OR DOING LAUNDRY

AND I THOUGHT MAYBE I COULD LEARN TO BE SATISFIED WITH THIS SMALL SLICE OF HAPPI-NESS.

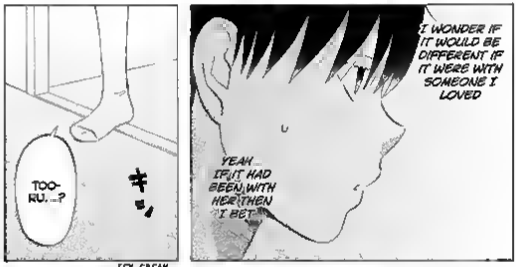
I COULDN'T TELL HER HOW I FELT, BUT AT LEAST I WAS ABLE TO SPEND TIME WITH THE ONE I LOVED

TOORU, HAVE YOU HEARD? APPARENTLY, NISHINAKA FROM OUR CLASS AND IBARAKI FROM CLASS A ARE GOING OUT WITH EACH OTHER--
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, YOU GET ASKED OUT A LOT BUT YOU HAVEN'T GONE OUT WITH ANYONE YET, HUH
--WHY WOULD I GO OUT WITH SOMEONE I DON'T LIKE?
How come?
Ugh
THIS IS JUST A RUMOR BUT PEOPLE ARE SAYING THEY'VE GONE ALL THE WAY WITH EACH OTHER
I CAN'T BELIEVE SOMEONE MY AGE IS ALREADY DOING STUFF THAT I CAN HARDLY IMAGINE.
Wow
REALLY?
I KNEW THAT I WOULD NEVER BE SATISFIED WITH JUST THIS.
I guess you don't have to worry since you're so popular--
...
BUT ONCE I REALIZED THAT SOONER OR LATER, SHE WOULD FIND SOMEONE TO GO OUT WITH TOO.

HEY— DO YOU THINK WE COULD GO TO YOUR HOUSE TODAY .?
UNFORTUNATELY AN OFFER CAME MY WAY JUST AS I WAS STARTING TO GET RESTLESS
PEOPLE WOULD SAY THINGS LIKE "SHE HAS A BOYFRIEND IN COLLEGE" AND THAT SHE GOT PAID DATING OLD MEN AND EVEN THAT PEOPLE HAVE SPOTTED HER HAVING SEX AT SCHOOL.
SHE WAS INFAMOUS FOR BEING LOOSE WITH GUYS
THERE WAS NO WAY OF KNOWING HOW MUCH OF THE RUMORS WERE TRUE
SHE WAS A SENPAI FROM THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS I WENT TO.
AND WE COULD GET SOMETHING COLD TO DRINK?
"WHERE THERE'S SMOKE, THERE'S FIRE."
YOU WERE AMAZING TOORU-KUN-♡

...BUT IT WAS JUST OKAY. NOTHING TOO UNEXPECTED.
I REALLY THOUGHT SEX WOULD BE MORE MIND-BLOWING OR SOMETHING.
...
I SHOULD HAVE TRUSTED THE RUMORS MORE...

SFX. KICK (X2)



SFX. CREAK

ON THAT DAY, I WENT FROM BEING THE MOST NORMAL LITTLE BROTHER IN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD TO THE WORLD'S WORST BROTHER.

THINGS CHANGED AFTER THAT
WHEN OUR PARENTS WEREN'T AROUND, WE NEVER TALKED TO EACH OTHER.
AND WE STOPPED DOING OUR HOMEWORK, WASHING THE DISHES, OR FOLDING LAUNDRY TOGETHER...

AND THEN...
I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU. PLEASE BE MY BOY-FRIEND...!

AND EVEN THOUGH SHE HAD ALWAYS LIKED TO CLEAN, NOW SHE WAS ABSOLUTELY OBSESSED WITH IT

I STARTED GOING OUT WITH ANY GIRL WHO ASKED ME
MY REPUTATION WORSENED AND I LOST A LOT OF MY FRIENDS AS A RESULT

I JUST STOPPED CARING.
SUKE

IF IT WEREN'T FOR YOUR SISTER-
HUH?

I JUST HOPE THAT SOMEDAY, YOU'LL BE ABLE TO FIND SOMEONE THAT YOU CAN REALLY LEARN TO LOVE.
KATSURA WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO STILL CARED ABOUT ME

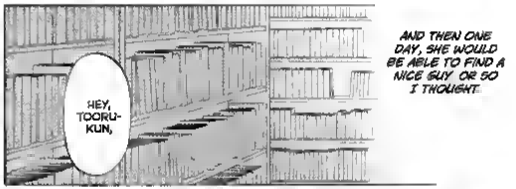
I THOUGHT TO MYSELF THAT THIS LIFESTYLE WAS CAUSING NOTHING BUT TROUBLE
SHE DOESN'T TRUST GUYS ANYMORE BECAUSE OF YOU

I WISH I HAD BEEN MORE CAREFUL AROUND HER.
SHE SHOULD NEVER BE WITH A GUY WHO'S GOOD FOR NOTHING LIKE ME
SERIOUSLY?
WHEN I WAS IN NINTH GRADE, I FOUND OUT BY WATCHING DRAMAS AND READING MANGA THAT STEP SIBLINGS CAN ACTUALLY GET MARRIED
AFTER THE INITIAL EXCITEMENT WORE OFF,
THE GUY SHE DATES HAS TO BE A REALLY GREAT GUY OR ELSE...

ALL I CAN DO IS JUST STAY BY HER SIDE EVEN THOUGH SHE HATES ME

I REALIZED THAT IT WAS ALREADY TOO LATE FOR THAT.
AFTER ALL, I WAS ALREADY THE WORLD'S WORST LITTLE BROTHER.

I BECAME A WALKING EXAMPLE OF THE KIND OF GUY THAT SHE SHOULD AVOID
I FELT BAD FOR CAUSING A FUSS EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE,
BUT THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO BUT LET HER PUT UP WITH IT


AND THEN ONE DAY, SHE WOULD BE ABLE TO FIND A NICE GUY. OR SO I THOUGHT.
HEY, TOORU-KUN,

AFTER I BECAME A HIGH SCHOOLER, I MET SOMEONE WHO WOULD DO A LOT MORE THAN JUST CAUSE A FUSS.
I KNOW YOU'RE DATING ME AND ALL, BUT YOU'RE ACTUALLY IN LOVE WITH YOUR SISTER, AREN'T YOU?

YOU KNOW, I'M IN THE SAME CLASS AS YOUR SISTER-
IT KINDA TICKS ME OFF, SO MAYBE I SHOULD MAKE THINGS A LITTLE HARDER FOR HER
WHERE'D YOU GET THAT IDEA?
SHE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH US.

TOORU-KUN, YOU REALLY JUST DON'T THINK MUCH OF GIRLS, DO YOU?
THAT'S BAD, YOU KNOW.
EVENTUALLY, IT'S GOING TO COME BACK TO BITE YOU.
BUT EVEN IF YOU'RE OKAY WITH THAT,

YOU NEVER KNOW IF SOMEONE IMPORTANT TO YOU WILL HAVE TO PAY THE PRICE FOR YOU.
AFTER THIS, MY SISTER WOULD COME TO LOATHE MY VERY EXISTENCE.